



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bulletin Title Goes Here - July 15, 2020

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WELCOME to the new and improved NC FPAC Agencies Monthly Newsletter.

**Dates to Remember:**

[May is Asian American - Pacific Islander Month](#) - 2021 Presidential Proclamation

**Memorial Day Holiday - May 31, 2021 (*Offices Closed*)**

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## Supervised Credit From FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet



your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your local FSA County Office [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## North Carolina Project Receive Regional Conservation Partnership Program Funding



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will invest \$3,500,000 in a locally driven, public-private partnerships in North Carolina. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Stream Habitat Improvement project will stabilize severely eroding and unstable streams in the Ravens Fork watershed working with a historically underserved population in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina (NC). The goals of this project include reduced stream sediment, improved aquatic habitat, improved plant diversity, and the planting of riparian buffers to offset carbon emissions.

Read more. [USDA Awards 85 New Partnership Projects to Help Mitigate Climate Change and Protect Natural Resources while Supporting America's Producers | NRCS](#)

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## USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction



\$2 million in cooperative agreements is available for local governments to host Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot projects. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and they are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture.

Learn more about the Cooperative Agreements [NC USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction](#)

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## USDA Reminds North Carolina Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds North Carolina producers to complete [crop acreage reports](#) by the applicable deadline for their county. Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your FSA county office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

September 30, 2020:	Aquaculture, Grass Sod, All Other Value Loss Crops
November 15, 2020:	Clary sage
January 2, 2021:	Honey/Apiculture
January 15, 2021:	Apples, Barley, Blueberries, Canola, Grapes, Oats, Peaches, Rapeseed, Wheat and all fall seeded small grains
May 1, 2021:	Nursery
May 15, 2021:	Cabbage PP1, Beans PP1, Potatoes, Strawberries
July 15, 2021:	Corn, Soybeans, Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, Grain Sorghum, CRP, Sweet Potatoes, Perennial grazing and forage, Miscanthus Grass, and all other crops and land uses
August 15, 2021	HEMP
September 15, 2021:	Cabbage PP2, Beans PP2,

Due to the pandemic, FSA has implemented acreage reporting flexibilities. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, online tools and virtual meetings. Some FSA offices are open for in-person appointments, but you must call first to make an appointment.

FSA offices are using Microsoft Teams software to virtually meet with producers to review maps and documents for certification. Producers who want to schedule a virtual appointment can download the Microsoft Teams app on their smart phone or tablet and call the FSA office for an appointment. You can also use Microsoft Teams from your personal computer without downloading software.

FSA county offices in North Carolina will provide maps to producers along with instructions for completing and returning the maps through either mail, email or through commercially available free and secure online tools such as Box for file sharing and OneSpan for eSignature solutions. After planting is complete, producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail, email or the Box and OneSpan tools by reporting date.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and send producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail, email, or Box by reporting date.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer has not timely filed an acreage report, the producer may file the acreage report within 30 days of the acreage reporting date. Because of the pandemic, late fees will be waived if filed within the 30 days.

FSA is also providing additional flexibilities for producers to file on acres with failed crops or crops that were prevented from planting because of extreme weather events. For insured crops, producers who timely filed a prevented planted claim with the reinsurance company but filed a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) form after the deadline will be considered timely filed for FSA purposes. For uninsured crops, producers may start a *Notice of Loss* by calling their FSA county office.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

When producers are working with FSA staff – either in-person or virtually – they can also take care of applications for other FSA programs, including the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. A CFAP Call Center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. The CFAP Call Center can provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the Call Center staff.

For questions, please call your FSA county office. To locate your local FSA office visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

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## Heirs' Property Landowners

*USDA recently launched a new website for producers to find information on heirs' property.*

Heirs' property is family owned land that is jointly owned by descendants of a deceased person whose estate did not clear probate. The descendants, or heirs, have the right to use the property, but they do not have a clear or marketable title to the property since the estate issues remain unresolved.

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized alternative documentation for heirs' property operators to establish a farm number. A farm number is required to be eligible for many different USDA programs, including lending, disaster relief programs, and participation in county committees.

For more information visit [farmers.gov/manage/HeirsPropertyLandowners](https://farmers.gov/manage/HeirsPropertyLandowners).

### Additional USDA Programs and Services

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including heirs' property landowners once they have a farm number.

USDA also has several special provisions and resources for heirs' property landowners, including:

- Targeted funding through farm loans
- Crop insurance benefits

- Conservation program benefits
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## USDA Expands and Renews Conservation Program in Effort to Boost Enrollment and Address Climate Change

USDA will open enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) with higher payment rates, new incentives, and a more targeted focus on the program's role in climate change mitigation. Additionally, USDA is announcing investments in partnerships to increase climate-smart agriculture, including \$330 million in 85 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects and \$25 million for On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials.

### Conservation Reserve Program

USDA's goal is to enroll up to 4 million new acres in CRP by raising rental payment rates and expanding the number of incentivized environmental practices allowed under the program. CRP is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with a long track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon, and reducing nitrogen runoff, as well providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

CRP is a powerful tool when it comes to climate mitigation, and acres currently enrolled in the program mitigate more than 12 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). If USDA reaches its goal of enrolling an additional 4 million acres into the program, it will mitigate an additional 3 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent and prevent 90 million pounds of nitrogen and 33 million tons of sediment from running into our waterways each year.

### New Climate-Smart Practice Incentive

To target the program on climate change mitigation, FSA is introducing a new **Climate-Smart Practice Incentive** for CRP general and continuous signups that aims to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate-Smart CRP practices include establishment of trees and permanent grasses, development of wildlife habitat, and wetland restoration. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is annual, and the amount is based on the benefits of each practice type.

### Higher Rental Rates and New Incentives

In 2021, CRP is capped at 25 million acres, and currently 20.8 million acres are enrolled. Furthermore, the cap will gradually increase to 27 million acres by 2023. To help increase producer interest and enrollment, FSA is:

- **Adjusting soil rental rates.** This enables additional flexibility for rate adjustments, including a possible increase in rates where appropriate.
- **Increasing payments for Practice Incentives from 20% to 50%.** This incentive for continuous CRP practices is based on the cost of establishment and is in addition to cost share payments.

- **Increasing payments for water quality practices.** Rates are increasing from 10% to 20% for certain water quality benefiting practices available through the CRP continuous signup, such as grassed waterways, riparian buffers, and filter strips.
- **Establishing a CRP Grassland minimum rental rate.** This benefits more than 1,300 counties with rates currently below the minimum.
- To learn more about updates to CRP, download our “What’s New with CRP” [fact sheet](#).

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## USDA Expands Aquaculture Disaster Assistance in North Carolina to Include Fish Raised for Food

In response to catastrophic aquaculture losses due to major winter storms that hit states along the U.S. Gulf Coast including North Carolina in February, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced a policy change that makes food fish and other aquatic species eligible for the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Previously, only farm-raised game and bait fish were eligible for death loss ELAP benefits. Beginning June 1, eligible aquaculture producers can request ELAP assistance for 2021 losses. This policy change is for the 2021 and subsequent program years.

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary.

To be eligible, losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2021. For farm-raised fish and other aquatic species death losses only that occurred prior to June 1, 2021, FSA is waiving the requirement to file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. An aquaculture producer will still need to be able to provide contemporaneous records upon request to document the eligible loss event and demonstrate the beginning and ending inventory. The deadline to file an application for payment for the 2021 program year is Jan. 31, 2022.

Producers must provide acreage reports for the surface acres of water where their aquatic species are raised. Acreage reports for 2021 must be filed by Sept. 30, 2022.

### More Information

USDA offers a comprehensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs. On [farmers.gov](#), the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine all program or loan options available for disaster recovery assistance. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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# USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather

Severe weather events create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers.

Despite every attempt to mitigate risk, your operation may suffer losses. USDA offers several programs to help with recovery.

## Risk Management

For producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP), we want to remind you to report crop damage to your crop insurance agent or the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

If you have crop insurance, contact your agency within 72 hours of discovering damage and be sure to follow up in writing within 15 days. If you have NAP coverage, file a Notice of Loss (also called Form CCC-576) within 15 days of loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

## Disaster Assistance

USDA also offers disaster assistance programs, which is especially important to livestock, fruit and vegetable, specialty and perennial crop producers who have fewer [risk management options](#).

First, the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) and [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died as a result of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage. And, the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) provides assistance to producers of grazed forage crop acres that have suffered crop loss due to a qualifying drought. Livestock producers suffering the impacts of drought can also request [Emergency Haying and Grazing](#) on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres.

Next, the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate and replant tree, vines or shrubs loss experienced by orchards and nurseries. This complements NAP or crop insurance coverage, which cover the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases.

For LIP and ELAP, you will need to file a Notice of Loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days. For TAP, you will need to file a program application within 90 days.

## Documentation

It's critical to keep accurate records to document all losses following this devastating cold weather event. Livestock producers are advised to document beginning livestock numbers by taking time and date-stamped video or pictures prior to after the loss.

Other common documentation options include:

- Purchase records
- Production records
- Vaccination records
- Bank or other loan documents
- Third-party certification

### **Other Programs**

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.

Additionally, FSA offers a variety of loans available including emergency loans that are triggered by disaster declarations and operating loans that can assist producers with credit needs. You can use these loans to replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, or refinance farm-related debts, and other needs.

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial resources through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. Assistance may also be available for emergency animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

### **Additional Resources**

Additional details – including payment calculations – can be found on our [NAP](#), [ELAP](#), [LIP](#), and [TAP](#) fact sheets. On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options.

While we never want to have to implement disaster programs, we are here to help. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. All [USDA Service Centers](#) are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments because of the pandemic.

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## **Foreign Buyers Notification**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the [AFIDA form](#) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements. The data gained from these disclosures is used in the preparation of periodic reports to the President and Congress concerning the effect of such holdings upon family farms and rural communities. Click [here](#) for more information on AFIDA.



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## Selected Interest Rates for May

90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	1.75%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	3.25%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	2.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7Years)	1.375%
Commodity Loans 1996 - Present	0.125%

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### North Carolina State Office

Farm Service Agency  
4407 Bland Road, Suite 175  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone: 919-875-4800  
Fax: 844-325-6874

**Rob Satterfield**  
Acting State Executive Director

[Rob.Satterfield@usda.gov](mailto:Rob.Satterfield@usda.gov)  
919-875-4824

#### STATE COMMITTEE

Alice Scott, Chair  
Jeffery Lee  
Nathan Ramsey  
Richard Renegar  
Jeff Tyson

#### DIVISION CHIEFS

**Tracie Jones**  
Administrative Officer

[Tracie.Jones@usda.gov](mailto:Tracie.Jones@usda.gov)  
919-875-4848

**Rob Satterfield**  
Chief Farm Programs

[Rob.Satterfield@usda.gov](mailto:Rob.Satterfield@usda.gov)  
919-875-4824

Paula Nicholls  
Chief Farm Loan Programs

**James Davis**  
Chief Price Support Programs

[Paula.Nicholls@usda.gov](mailto:Paula.Nicholls@usda.gov)  
919-875-4854

[Jamesa.Davis@usda.gov](mailto:Jamesa.Davis@usda.gov)  
919-875-4818

---

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

4407 Bland Road, Suite 170  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Phone: 919-873-2100  
Fax: 919-873-2156

Timothy Beard  
State Conservationist

[Timothy.Beard@usda.gov](mailto:Timothy.Beard@usda.gov)  
919-873-2101

Channa Proctor  
Administrative Assistant to the State  
Conservationist

[Channa.Proctor@usda.gov](mailto:Channa.Proctor@usda.gov)  
919-873-2102

Stuart Lee  
State Public Affairs Officer

[Stuart.Lee@usda.gov](mailto:Stuart.Lee@usda.gov)  
919-873-2107

---

**Risk Management Agency**

Regional Office  
4405 Bland Road, Suite 160  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Phone: 919-875-4880  
Fax: 919-875-4915

Alexander Sereno  
Director  
[Alexander.Sereno@usda.gov](mailto:Alexander.Sereno@usda.gov)  
919-875-4880

Jessica Dedrick  
Director - Compliance Office  
[Jessica.Dedrick@usda.gov](mailto:Jessica.Dedrick@usda.gov)  
919-875-4946